

Tulips and
Chimneys

Tulips and Chimneys

By E. E. Cummings

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Tulips and Chimneys

TULIPS

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Tulips

EPITHALAMION (*Wedding Song*)

I.

Thou aged unreluctant earth who dost
with quivering continual thighs invite
the thrilling rain the slender paramour
to toy with thy extraordinary lust,
(the sinuous rain which rising from thy bed
steals to his wife the sky and hour by hour
wholly renews her pale flesh with delight)
—immortally whence are the high gods fled?

Speak elm eloquent pandar with thy nod
significant to the ecstatic earth
in token of his coming whom her soul
burns to embrace—and didst thou know the god
from but the imprint of whose cloven feet
the shrieking dryad sought her leafy goal,
at the mere echo of whose shining mirth
the furious hearts of mountains ceased to beat?

Wind beautifully who wanderest
over smooth pages of forgotten joy
proving the peaceful theorems of the flowers
—didst e'er depart upon more exquisite quest?
and did thy fortunate fingers sometime dwell
(within a greener shadow of secret bowers)
among the curves of that delicious boy
whose serious grace one goddess loved too well?

Chryselephantine Zeus Olympian
sceptred colossus of the Pheidian soul
whose eagle frights creation, in whose palm
Nike presents the crown sweetest to man,
whose liliated robe the sun's white hands emboss,
betwixt whose absolute feet anoint with calm
of intent stars circling the acerb pole
poises, smiling, the diadumenos

in whose young chiseled eyes the people saw
their once again victorious Pantarkes
(whose grace the prince of artists made him bold
to imitate between the feet of awe),
thunderer whose omnipotent brow showers
its curls of unendured eternal gold
over the infinite breast in bright degrees,
whose pillow is the graces and the hours,

father of gods and men whose subtle throne
twain sphinxes bear each with a writhing youth
caught to her brazen breasts, whose foot-stool tells
how fought the looser of the warlike zone
of her that brought forth tall Hippolytus,
lord on whose pedestal the deep expels
(over Selene's car closing uncouth)
of Helios the sweet wheels tremulous—

are there no kings in Argos, that the song
is silent, of the steep unspeaking tower
within whose brightening strictness Danæ
saw the night severed and the glowing throng
descend, felt on her flesh the amorous strain
of gradual hands and yielding to that fee
her eager body's unimmortal flower
knew in the darkness a more burning rain?

2.

And still the mad magnificent herald Spring
assembles beauty from forgetfulness
with the wild trump of April: witchery
of sound and odour drives the wingless thing
man forth into bright air, for now the red
leaps in the maple's cheek, and suddenly
by shining hordes in sweet unserious dress
ascends the golden crocus from the dead.

Tulips

On dappled dawn forth rides the pungent sun
with hooded day preening upon his hand
followed by gay untimid final flowers
(which dressed in various tremulous armor stun
the eyes of ragged earth who sees them pass)
while hunted from his kingdom winter cowers,
seeing green armies steadily expand
hearing the spear-song of the marching grass.

A silver sudden parody of snow
tickles the air to golden tears, and hark!
the flicker 's laughing yet, while on the hills
the pines deepen to whispers primeval and throw
backward their foreheads to the barbarous bright
sky, and suddenly from the valley thrills
the unimaginable upward lark
and drowns the earth and passes into light

(slowly in life's serene perpetual round
a pale world gathers comfort to her soul,
hope richly scattered by the abundant sun
invades the new mosaic of the ground
—let but the incurious curtaining dusk be drawn
surpassing nets are sedulously spun
to snare the brutal dew,—the authentic scroll
of fairie hands and vanishing with dawn).

Spring, that omits no mention of desire
in every curved and curling thing, yet holds
continuous intercourse—through skies and trees
the lilac's smoke the poppy's pompous fire
the pansy's purple patience and the grave
frailty of daisies—by what rare unease
revealed of teasingly transparent folds—
with man's poor soul superlatively brave.

Surely from robes of particoloured peace
with mouth flower-faint and undiscovered eyes
and dim slow perfect body amorous
(whiter than lilies which are born and cease
for being whiter than this world) exhales
the hovering high perfume curious
of that one month for whom the whole year dies,
risen at length from palpitating veils.

O still miraculous May! O shining girl
of time untarnished! O small intimate
gently primeval hands, frivolous feet
divine! O singular and breathless pearl!
O indefinable frail ultimate pose!
O visible beatitude sweet sweet
intolerable! silence immaculate
of god's evasive audible great rose!

Tulips

3.

Lover, lead forth thy love unto that bed
prepared by whitest hands of waiting years,
curtained with wordless worship absolute,
unto the certain altar at whose head
stands that clear candle whose expecting breath
exults upon the tongue of flame half-mute,
(haste e'er some thrush with silver several tears
complete the perfumed paraphrase of death).

Now is the time when all occasional things
close into silence, only one tree, one
svelte translation of eternity
unto the pale meaning of heaven clings,
(whose million leaves in winsome indolence
simmer upon thinking twilight momentarily)
as down the oblivious west's numerous dun
magnificence conquers magnificence.

In heaven's intolerable athanor
inimitably tortured the base day
utters at length her soft intrinsic hour,
and from those tenuous fires which more and more
sink and are lost the divine alchemist,
the magus of creation, lifts a flower—
whence is the world's insufferable clay
clothed with incognizable amethyst.

Lady at whose imperishable smile
the amazed doves flicker upon sunny wings
as if in terror of eternity,
(or seeming that they would mistrust a while
the moving of beauteous dead mouths throughout
that very proud transparent company
of quivering ghosts-of-love which scarcely sings
drifting in slow diaphanous faint rout),

queen in the inconceivable embrace
of whose tremendous hair that blossom stands
whereof is most desire, yet less than those
twain perfect roses whose ambrosial grace,
goddess, thy crippled thunder-forging groom
or the loud lord of skipping mænads knows,—
having Discordia's apple in thy hands,
which the scared shepherd gave thee for his doom—

O thou within the chancel of whose charms
the tall boy god of everlasting war
received the shuddering sacrament of sleep,
betwixt whose cool incorrigible arms
impaled upon delicious mystery,
with gaunt limbs reeking of the whispered deep,
deliberate groping ocean fondled o'er
the warm long flower of unchastity,

imperial Cytherea, from frail foam
sprung with irrevocable nakedness
to strike the young world into smoking song—
as the first star perfects the sensual dome
of darkness, and the sweet strong final bird
transcends the sight, O thou to whom belong
the hearts of lovers!—I beseech thee bless
thy suppliant singer and his wandering word.

OF NICOLETTE

dreaming in marble all the castle lay
like some gigantic ghost-flower born of night
blossoming in white towers to the moon,
soft sighed the passionate darkness to the tune
of tiny troubadours, and (phantom-white)
dumb-blooming boughs let fall their glorious snows,
and the unearthly sweetness of a rose
swam upward from the troubled heart of May;

a Winged Passion woke and one by one
there fell upon the night, like angel's tears,
the syllables of that mysterious prayer,
and as an opening lily drowsy-fair
(when from her couch of poppy petals peers
the sleepy morning) gently draws apart
her curtains, and lays bare her trembling heart,
with beads of dew made jewels by the sun,

so one high shining tower (which as a glass
turned light to flame and blazed with snowy fire)
unfolding, gave the moon a nymphlike face,
a form whose snowy symmetry of grace
haunted the limbs as music haunts the lyre,
a creature of white hands, who letting fall
a thread of lustre from the castle wall
glided, a drop of radiance, to the grass—

shunning the sudden moonbeam's treacherous snare
she sought the harbouring dark, and (catching up
her delicate silk) all white, with shining feet,
went forth into the dew: right wildly beat
her heart at every kiss of daisy-cup,
and from her cheek the beauteous colour went
with every bough that reverently bent
to touch the yellow wonder of her hair.

SONGS

I

(thee will i praise between those rivers whose
white voices pass upon forgetting (fail
me not) whose courseless waters are a gloat
of silver; o'er whose night three willows wail,
a slender dimness in the unshapeful hour
making dear moan in tones of stroked flower;
let not thy lust one threaded moment lose:
haste) the very shadowy sheep float
free upon terrific pastures pale,

whose tall mysterious shepherd lifts a cheek
teartroubled to the momentary wind
with guiding smile, lips wisely minced for blown
kisses, condemnatory fingers thinned
of pity—so he stands counting the moved
myriads wonderfully loved,
(hasten, it is the moment which shall seek
all blossoms that do learn, scents of not known
musics in whose careful eyes are dinned;

and the people of perfect darkness fills
his mind who will their hungering whispers hear
with weepings soundless, saying of "alas
we were chaste on earth we ghosts: hark to the sheer
cadence of our gray flesh in the gloom!
and still to be immortal is our doom;
but a rain frailly raging whom the hills
sink into and their sunsets, it shall pass.
Our feet tread sleepless meadows sweet with fear")

then be with me: unseriously seem
by the perusing greenness of thy thought
my golden soul fabulously to glue
in a superior terror; be thy taut
flesh silver, like the currency of faint
cities eternal—e'er the sinless taint
of thy long sinful arms about me dream
shall my love wholly taste thee as a new
wine from steep hills by darkness softly brought—

(be with me in the sacred witchery
of almostness which May makes follow soon
on the sweet heels of passed afterday,
clothe thy soul's coming merely, with a croon
of mingling robes musically revealed
in rareness: let thy twain eyes deeply wield
a noise of petals falling silently
through the far-spaced possible nearaway
from huge trees drenched by a rounding moon)

II

Always before your voice my soul
half-beautiful and wholly droll
is as some smooth and awkward foal,
whereof young moons begin
the newness of his skin,

so of my stupid sincere youth
the exquisite failure uncouth
discovers a trembling and smooth
Unstrength, against the strong
silences of your song;

or as a single lamb whose sheen
of full unsheared fleece is mean
beside its lovelier friends, between
your thoughts more white than wool
My thought is sorrowful:

but my heart smote in trembling thirds
of anguish quivers to your words,
As to a flight of thirty birds
shakes with a thickening fright
the sudden fooled light.

it is the autumn of a year:
When through the thin air stooped with fear,

Tulips

across the harvest whitely peer
empty of surprise
death's faultless eyes

(whose hand my folded soul shall know
while on faint hills do frailly go
The peaceful terrors of the snow,
and before your dead face
which sleeps, a dream shall pass)

and these my days their sounds and flowers
Fall in a pride of petaled hours,
like flowers at the feet of mowers
whose bodies strong with love
through meadows hugely move.

yet what am i that such and such
mysteries very simply touch
me, whose heart-wholeness overmuch
Expects of your hair pale,
a terror musical?

while in an earthless hour my fond
soul seriously yearns beyond
this fern of sunset frond on frond
opening in a rare
Slowness of gloried air . . .

The flute of morning stilled in noon—
noon the implacable bassoon—
now Twilight seeks the thrill of moon,
washed with a wild and thin
despair of violin

III

Thy fingers make early flowers of
all things.

thy hair mostly the hours love:

a smoothness which

sings, saying

(though love be a day)

do not fear, we will go amaying.

thy whitest feet crisply are straying.

Always

thy moist eyes are at kisses playing,

whose strangeness much

says; singing

(though love be a day)

for which girl art thou flowers bringing?

To be thy lips is a sweet thing

and small.

Death, Thee i call rich beyond wishing

if this thou catch,

else missing.

(though love be a day

and life be nothing, it shall not stop kissing).

IV

All in green went my love riding
on a great horse of gold
into the silver dawn.

four lean hounds crouched low and smiling
the merry deer ran before.

Fleeter be they than dappled dreams
the swift sweet deer
the red rare deer.

Four red roebuck at a white water
the cruel bugle sang before.

Horn at hip went my love riding
riding the echo down
into the silver dawn.

four lean hounds crouched low and smiling
the level meadows ran before.

Softer be they than slippered sleep
the lean lithe deer
the fleet flown deer.

Four fleet does at a gold valley
the famished arrow sang before.

Bow at belt went my love riding
riding the mountain down
into the silver dawn.

four lean hounds crouched low and smiling
the sheer peaks ran before.

Paler be they than daunting death
the sleek slim deer
the tall tense deer.

Four tall stags at a green mountain
the lucky hunter sang before.

All in green went my love riding
on a great horse of gold
into the silver dawn.

four lean hounds crouched low and smiling
my heart fell dead before.

V

Doll's boy 's asleep
under a stile
he sees eight and twenty
ladies in a line

the first lady
says to nine ladies
his lips drink water
but his heart drinks wine

the tenth lady
says to nine ladies
they must chain his foot
for his wrist 's too fine

the nineteenth
says to nine ladies
you take his mouth
for his eyes are mine.

Doll's boy 's asleep
under the stile
for every mile the feet go
the heart goes nine

VI

when god lets my body be

From each brave eye shall sprout a tree
fruit that dangles therefrom

the purpled world will dance upon
Between my lips which did sing

a rose shall beget the spring
that maidens whom passion wastes

will lay between their little breasts
My strong fingers beneath the snow

Into strenuous birds shall go
my love walking in the grass

their wings will touch with her face
and all the while shall my heart be

With the bulge and nuzzle of the sea

PUELLA MEA

Harun Omar and Master Hafiz
keep your dead beautiful ladies.
Mine is a little lovelier
than any of your ladies were.

In her perfectest array
my lady, moving in the day,
is a little stranger thing
than crisp Sheba with her king
in the morning wandering.

Through the young and awkward hours
my lady perfectly moving,
through the new world scarce astir
my fragile lady wandering
in whose perishable poise
is the mystery of Spring
(with her beauty more than snow
dexterous and fugitive
my very frail lady drifting
distinctly, moving like a myth

in the uncertain morning, with
April feet like sudden flowers
and all her body filled with May)
—moving in the unskilful day
my lady utterly alive,
to me is a more curious thing
(a thing more nimble and complete)
than ever to Judea's king
were the shapely sharp cunning
and withal delirious feet
of the Princess Salome
carefully dancing in the noise
of Herod's silence, long ago.

If she a little turn her head
i know that i am wholly dead:
nor ever did on such a throat
the lips of Tristram slowly dote,
La beale Isoud whose leman was.
And if my lady look at me
(with her eyes which like two elves
incredibly amuse themselves)
with a look of færie,
perhaps a little suddenly
(as sometimes the improbable
beauty of my lady will)
—at her glance my spirit shies
rearing (as in the miracle

of a lady who had eyes
which the king's horses might not kill.)

But should my lady smile, it were
a flower of so pure surprise
(it were so very new a flower,
a flower so frail, a flower so glad)
as trembling used to yield with dew
when the world was young and new
(a flower such as the world had
in Springtime when the world was mad
and Launcelot spoke to Guenever,
a flower which most heavy hung
with silence when the world was young
and Diarmid looked in Grania's eyes.)

But should my lady's beauty play
at not speaking (sometimes as
it will) the silence of her face
doth immediately make
in my heart so great a noise,
as in the sharp and thirsty blood
of Paris would not all the Troys
of Helen's beauty: never did
Lord Jason (in impossible things
victorious impossibly)
so wholly burn, to undertake
Medea's rescuing eyes; nor he
when swooned the white egyptian day
who with Egypt's body lay.

Lovely as those ladies were
mine is a little lovelier.

And if she speak in her frail way,
it is wholly to bewitch
my smallest thought with a most swift
radiance wherein slowly drift
murmurous things divinely bright;
it is foolingly to smite
my spirit with the lithe free twitch
of scintillant space, with the cool writhe
of gloom truly which syncopate
some sunbeam's skilful fingerings;
is is utterly to lull
with foliate inscrutable
sweetness my soul obedient;
it is to stroke my being with
numbing forests frolicsome,
fleetly mystical, aroam
with keen creatures of idiom
(beings alert and innocent
very deftly upon which
indolent miracles impinge)
—it is distinctly to confute
my reason with the deep caress
of every most shy thing and mute,
it is to quell me with the twinge
of all living intense things.

Never my soul so fortunate
is (past the luck of all dead men
and loving) as invisibly when
upon her palpable solitude
a furtive occult fragrance steals,
a gesture of immaculate
perfume—whereby (with fear aglow)
my soul is wont wholly to know
the poignant instantaneous fern
whose scrupulous enchanted fronds
toward all things intrinsic yearn,
the immanent subliminal
fern of her delicious voice
(of her voice which always dwells
beside the vivid magical
impetuous and utter ponds
of dream; and very secret food
its leaves inimitable find
beyond the white authentic springs,
beyond the sweet instinctive wells,
which make to flourish the minute
spontaneous meadow of her mind)
—the vocal fern, always which feels
the keen ecstatic actual tread
(and thereto perfectly responds)
of all things exquisite and dead,
all living things and beautiful.

(Caliph and king their ladies had
to love them and to make them glad,
when the world was young and mad,
in the city of Bagdad—
mine is a little lovelier
than any of those ladies were.)

Her body is most beauteous,
being for all things amorous
fashioned very curiously
of roses and of ivory.
The immaculate crisp head
is such as only certain dead
and careful painters love to use
for their youngest angels (whose
praising bodies in a row
between slow glories fleetly go.)
Upon a keen and lovely throat
the strangeness of her face doth float,
which in eyes and lips consists
—always upon the mouth there trysts
curvingly a fragile smile
which like a flower lieth (while
within the eyes is dimly heard
a wistful and precarious bird.)
Springing from fragrant shoulders small,
ardent, and perfectly withal
smooth to stroke and sweet to see

as a supple and young tree,
her slim lascivious arms alight
in skilful wrists which hint at flight
—my lady's very singular
and slenderest hands moreover are
(which as lilies smile and quail)
of all things perfect the most frail.

(Whoso rideth in the tale
of Chaucer knoweth many a pair
of companions blithe and fair;
who to walk with Master Gower
in Confessio doth prefer
shall not lack for beauty there,
nor he that will amaying go
with my lord Boccaccio—
whoso knocketh at the door
of Marie and of Maleore
findeth of ladies goodly store
whose beauty did in nothing err.
If to me there shall appear
than a rose more sweetly known,
more silently than a flower,
my lady naked in her hair—
i for those ladies nothing care
nor any lady dead and gone.)

Each tapering breast is firm and smooth

that in a lovely fashion doth
from my lady's body grow;
as morning may a lily know,
her petaled flesh doth entertain
the adroit blood's mysterious skein
(but like some passionate earlier
flower, the snow will oft utter,
whereof the year has perfect bliss—
for each breast a blossom is,
which being a little while caressed
its fragrance makes the lover blest.)
Her waist is a most tiny hinge
of flesh, a winsome thing and strange;
apt in my hand warmly to lie
it is a throbbing neck whereby
to grasp the belly's ample vase
(that urgent urn which doth amass
for whoso drinks, a dizzier wine
than should the grapes of heaven combine
with earth's madness)—'tis a gate
unto a palace intricate
(whereof the luscious pillars rise
which are her large and shapely thighs)
in whose dome the trembling bliss
of a kingdom wholly is.

Beneath her thighs such legs are seen
as were the pride of the world's queen:
each is a verb, miraculous

inflected oral devious,
beneath the body's breathing noun
(moreover the delicious frown
of the grave great sensual knees
well might any monarch please.)
Each ankle is divinely shy;
as if for fear you would espy
the little distinct foot (if whose
very minuteness doth abuse
reason, why then the artificer
did most exquisitely err.)

When the world was like a song
heard behind a golden door,
poet and sage and caliph had
to love them and to make them glad
ladies with lithe eyes and long
(when the world was like a flower
Omar Hafiz and Harun
loved their ladies in the moon)
—fashioned very curiously
of roses and of ivory
if naked she appear to me
my flesh is an enchanted tree;
with her lips' most frail parting
my body hears the cry of Spring,
and with their frailest syllable
its leaves go crisp with miracle.

Love!—maker of my lady,
in that alway beyond this
poem or any poem she
of whose body words are afraid
perfectly beautiful is,
forgive these words which i have made.
And never boast your dead beauties,
you greatest lovers in the world!
who with Grania strangely fled,
who with Egypt went to bed,
whom white-thighed Semiramis
put up her mouth to wholly kiss—
never boast your dead beauties,
mine being unto me sweeter
(of whose shy delicious glance
things which never more shall be,
perfect things of færie,
are intense inhabitants;
in whose warm superlative
body do distinctly live
all sweet cities passed away—
in her flesh at break of day
are the smells of Nineveh,
in her eyes when day is gone
are the cries of Babylon.)
Diarmid Paris and Solomon,
Omar Harun and Master Hafiz,
to me your ladies are all one—

keep your dead beautiful ladies.

Eater of all things lovely—Time!
upon whose watering lips the world
poises a moment (futile, proud,
a costly morsel of sweet tears)
gesticulates, and disappears—
of all dainties which do crowd
gaily upon oblivion
sweeter than any there is one;
to touch it is the fear of rhyme—
in life's very fragile hour
(when the world was like a tale
made of laughter and of dew,
was a flight, a flower, a flame,
was a tendril fleety curled
upon frailness) used to stroll
(very slowly) one or two
ladies like flowers made,
softly used to wholly move
slender ladies made of dream
(in the lazy world and new
sweetly used to laugh and love
ladies with crisp eyes and frail,
in the city of Bagdad.)

Keep your dead beautiful ladies
Harun Omar and Master Hafiz.

CHANSONS INNOCENTES

I

in Just-
spring when the world is mud-
luscious the little
lame baloonman

whistles far and wee

and eddieandbill come
running from marbles and
piracies and it's
spring

when the world is puddle-wonderful

the queer
old baloonman whistles
far and wee
and bettyandisbel come dancing

from hop-sotch and jump-rope and

it's
spring
and
the

goat-footed

balloonMan whistles
far
and
wee

II

hist whist
little ghostthings
tip-toe
twinkle-toe

little twitchy
witches and tingling
goblins
hob-a-nob hob-a-nob

little hoppy happy
toad in tweeds
tweeds
little itchy mousies

with scuttling
eyes rustle and run and
hidehidehide
whisk

whisk look out for the old woman
with the wart on her nose
what she'll do to yer
nobody knows

for she knows the devil ooch
the devil ouch
the devil
ach the great

green
dancing
devil
devil

devil
devil

wheeEEE

III

Tumbling-hair

picker of buttercups

violets

dandelions

And the big bullying daisies

through the field wonderful

with eyes a little sorry

Another comes

also picking flowers

ORIENTALE

I

i spoke to thee
with a smile and thou didst not
answer
thy mouth is as
a chord of crimson music

Come hither

O thou, is life not a smile?

i spoke to thee with
a song and thou
didst not listen
thine eyes are as a vase
of divine silence

Come hither

O thou, is life not a song?

i spoke
to thee with a soul and
thou didst not wonder
thy face is as a dream locked
in white fragrance
Come hither
O thou, is life not love?

i speak to
thee with a sword
and thou art silent
thy breast is as a tomb
softer than flowers
Come hither
O thou, is love not death?

II

lean candles hunger in
the silence a
brown god
smiles between greentwittering

smokes from broken eyes
a sound
of strangling breasts and bestial
grovelling

hands rasps the purple
dark-
ness
a

worshipper
prostrate within twitching shadow
lolls

sobbing

with lust

III

my love
thy hair is one kingdom
 the king whereof is darkness
thy forehead is a flight of flowers

thy head is a quick forest
 filled with sleeping birds
thy breasts are swarms of white bees
 upon the bough of thy body
thy body to me is April
in whose armpits is the approach of spring

thy thighs are white horses yoked to a chariot
 of kings
they are the striking of a good minstrel
between them is always a pleasant song

my love
thy head is a casket
 of the cool jewel of thy mind
the hair of thy head is one warrior
 innocent of defeat
thy hair upon thy shoulders is an army
 with victory and with trumpets

thy legs are the trees of dreaming
whose fruit is the very eatage of forgetfulness

thy lips are satraps in scarlet
in whose kiss is the combining of kings
thy wrists
are holy
which are the keepers of the keys of thy blood
thy feet upon thy ankles are flowers in vases
of silver

in thy beauty is the dilemma of flutes

thy eyes are the betrayal
of bells comprehended through incense

IV

listen

beloved

i dreamed

it appeared that you thought to

escape me and became a great

lily atilt on

insolent

waters but i was aware of

fragrance and i came riding upon

a horse of porphyry into the

waters i rode down the red

horse shrieking from splintering

foam caught you clutched you upon my

mouth

listen

beloved

i dreamed in my dream you had

desire to thwart me and became

a little bird and hid

in a tree of tall marble

from a great way i distinguished

singing and i came

riding upon a scarlet sunset

trampling the night easily

from the shocked impossible

tower i caught

you strained you
 broke you upon my blood
 listen
 beloved i dreamed
 i thought you would have deceived
 me and became a star in the kingdom
 of heaven
 through day and space i saw you close
 your eyes and i came riding
 upon a thousand crimson years arched with agony
 i reined them in tottering before
 the throne and as
 they shied at the automaton moon from
 the transplendent hand of sombre god
 i picked you
 as an apple is picked by the little peasants for their girls

V

unto thee i
burn incense
the bowl crackles
upon the gloom arise purple pencils

fluent spires of fragrance
the bowl
seethes
a flutter of stars

a turbulence of forms
delightful with indefinable flowering,
the air is
deep with desirable flowers

i think
thou lovest incense
for in the ambiguous faint aspirings
the indolent frail ascensions,

of thy smile rises the immaculate
sorrow
of thy low
hair flutter the level litanies

unto thee i burn
 incense, over the dim smoke
 straining my lips are vague with
 ecstasy my palpitating breasts inhale the

slow
 supple
 flower
 of thy beauty, my heart discovers thee

unto
 whom i
 burn
 olbanum

VI

I.

the emperor
sleeps in a palace of porphyry
which was a million years building
he takes the air in a howdah
of jasper beneath saffron
umbrellas
upon an elephant
twelve feet high
behind whose ear
sits always a crowned
king twir-
ling an
ancus of
ebony
the fountains of the emperor's
palace run sunlight and
moonlight and the emperor's
elephant is a thousand years old

the harem of
the emperor
is carpeted with
gold cloth
from the
ceiling (one

diamond timid
 with nesting incense)
 fifty
 marble
 pillars
 slipped from immeasurable
 height, fall, fifty, silent

in the incense is tangled a cool moon

there are thrice-three-hundred
 doors carven of chalcedony and
 before every door a naked
 eunuch watches
 on their heads turbans of a hundred
 colours
 in their hands scimitars like windy torches
 each
 is
 blacker than oblivion

the ladies
 of the emperor's
 harem are queens
 of all the earth and the rings
 upon their hands are from mines
 a mile deep
 but the body of

the queen of queens is
more transparent
than water, she is softer than birds

2.

when the emperor is very
amorous he reclines upon
the couch of couches and
beckons with
the little
finger of his left
hand

then the
thrice-three-hundredth
door is opened by the tallest
eunuch and the queen
of queens comes
forth
ankles
musical with large pearls
kingdoms in her ears

at the feet of
the emperor a cithern-
player squats with
quivering gold
body
behind

the emperor ten
elected warriors with
bodies of lazy jade
and twitching
eyelids
finger
their
unquiet
spears

the queen of queens is dancing

her subtle
body weaving
insinuating upon the gold cloth
incessantly creates patterns of sudden
lust
her
stealing body ex-
pending gathering pouring upon itself stiffenS
to a
white thorn
of desire

the taut neck of the citharede wags
in the dust the ghastly warriors
amber with lust breathe
together the emperor, exerting

himself among his pillows throws
jewels at the queen of queens and
white money upon her nakedness
he
nods

and all
depart through the bruised air aflutter with pearls

3.

they are
alone
he beckons, she rises she
stands
a moment
in the passion of the fifty
pillars
listening

while the queens of all the
earth writhe upon deep rugs

AMORES

I

consider O
woman this
my body.
for it has

lain
with empty arms
upon the giddy hills
to dream of you,

approve these
firm unsated
eyes
which have beheld

night's speechless carnival
the painting
of the dark
with meteors

streaming from playful
immortal hands
the bursting
of the wafted stars

(in time to come you shall
remember of this night amazing
ecstasies slowly,
in the gluttoned

heart fleet
flowerterrible
memories
shall

rise, slowly
return upon the
red elected lips

scaleless visions)

II

there is a
moon sole
in the blue
night

amorous of waters
tremulous,
blinded with silence the
undulous heaven yearns where

in tense starlessness
anoint with ardor
the yellow lover

stands in the dumb dark
svelte
and
urgent

(again
love i slowly
gather
of thy languorous mouth the

thrilling
flower)

III

as is the sea marvelous
from god's
hands which sent her forth
to sleep upon the world

and the earth withers
the moon crumbles
one by one
stars flutter into dust

but the sea
does not change
and she goes forth out of hands and
she returns into hands

and is with sleep

love,
 the breaking

of your
 soul
 upon
my lips

IV

if i believe
in death be sure
of this
it is

because you have loved me,
moon and sunset
stars and flowers
gold crescendo and silver muting

of seatides
i trusted not,
one night
when in my fingers

drooped your shining body
when my heart
sang between your perfect
breasts

darkness and beauty of stars
was on my mouth petals danced
against my eyes
and down

the singing reaches of
my soul
spoke
the green-

greeting pale-
departing irrevocable
sea
i knew thee death.

and when
i have offered up each fragrant
night, when all my days
shall have before a certain

face become
white
perfume
only,

from the ashes
then
thou wilt rise and thou
wilt come to her and brush

the mischief from her eyes and fold
her

mouth the new
flower with

thy unimaginable
wings, where dwells the breath
of all persisting stars

V

the glory is fallen out of
the sky the last immortal
leaf
is

dead and the gold
year
a formal spasm
in the

dust
this is the passing of all shining things
therefore we also
blandly

into receptive
earth, O let
us
descend

take
shimmering wind
these fragile splendors from
us crumple them hide

them in thy breath drive
them in nothingness
for we
would sleep

this is the passing of all shining things
no lingering no backward-
wondering be unto
us O

soul, but straight
glad feet fearruining
and glorygirded
faces

lead us
into the
serious
steep

darkness

VI

i like
to think that on
the flower you gave me when we
loved

the far-
departed mouth sweetly-saluted
lingers.
if one marvel

seeing the hunger of my
lips for a dead thing,
i shall instruct
him silently with becoming

steps to seek
your face and i
entreat, by certain foolish perfect
hours

dead too,
if that he come receive
him as your lover sumptuously
being

kind

because i trust him to
your grace, and for
in his own land

he is called death.

VII

O Distinct
Lady of my unkempt adoration
if i have made
a fragile certain

song under the window of your soul
it is not like any songs
(the singers the others
they have been faithful

to many things and which
die
i have been sometimes true
to Nothing and which lives

they were fond of the handsome
moon never spoke ill of the
pretty stars and to
the serene the complicated

and the obvious
they were faithful
and which i despise,
frankly

admitting i have been true
only to the noise of worms.
in the eligible day
under the unaccountable sun)

Distinct Lady
swiftly take
my fragile certain song
that we may watch together

how behind the doomed
exact smile of life's
placid obscure palpable
carnival where to a normal

melody of probable violins dance
the square virtues and the oblong sins
perfectly
gesticulate the accurate

strenuous lips of incorruptible
Nothing under the ample
sun, under the insufficient
day under the noise of worms

VIII

your little voice

Over the wires came leaping
and i felt suddenly
dizzy

With the jostling and shouting of merry flowers
wee skipping high-heeled flames
courtesied before my eyes

or twinkling over to my side

Looked up

with impertinently exquisite faces

floating hands were laid upon me

I was whirled and tossed into delicious dancing

up

Up

with the pale important

stars and the Humorous

moon

dear girl

How i was crazy how i cried when i heard

over time

and tide and death

leaping

Sweetly

your voice

LA GUERRE

I

the bigness of cannon
is skilful,

but i have seen
death's clever enormous voice
which hides in a fragility
of poppies

i say that sometimes
on these long talkative animals
are laid fists of huger silence

I have seen all the silence
filled with vivid noiseless boys

at Roupy
i have seen
between barrages,

the night utter ripe unspeaking girls.

II

O sweet spontaneous
earth how often have
the
doting

fingers of
prurient philosophers pinched
and
poked

thee
, has the naughty thumb
of science prodded
thy

beauty . how
often have religions taken
thee upon their scraggy knees
squeezing and

buffeting thee that thou mightest conceive
gods
(but
true

to the incomparable
couch of death thy
rhythmic
lover

thou answerest

them only with

spring)

IMPRESSIONS

I

the sky a silver
dissonance by the correct
fingers of April
resolved

into a
clutter of trite jewels

now like a moth with stumbling

wings flutters and flops along the
grass collides with trees and
houses and finally,
butts into the river

II

writhe and
gape of tortured

perspective
rasp and graze of splintered

normality

crackle and

sag

of planes clamors of

collision

collapse As

peacefully,

lifted

into the awful beauty

of sunset

the young city

putting off dimension with a blush

enters

the becoming garden of her agony

III

i was considering how
within night's loose
sack a star's
nibbling in-

fin
-i-
tes-
i
-mal-
ly devours

darkness the
hungry star
which
will e

-ven
tu-
al
-ly jiggle
the bait of
dawn and be jerked

into

eternity. when over my head a
 shooting
 star
 Bur s

(t
 into a stale shriek
 like an alarm-clock)

IV

the hours rise up putting off stars and it is
dawn
into the street of the sky light walks scattering poems

on earth a candle is
extinguished the city
wakes
with a song upon her
mouth having death in her eyes

and it is dawn
the world
goes forth to murder dreams

i see in the street where strong
men are digging bread
and i see the brutal faces of
people contented hideous hopeless cruel happy

and it is day,
in the mirror
i see a frail
man
dreaming
dreams

dreams in the mirror

and it
is dusk on earth

a candle is lighted
and it is dark.
the people are in their houses
the frail man is in his bed
the city

sleeps with death upon her mouth having a song in her eyes
the hours descend,
putting on stars

in the street of the sky night walks scattering poems

V

stinging
gold swarms
upon the spires
silver

chants the litanies the
great bells are ringing with rose
the lewd fat bells

and a tall

wind
is dragging
the
sea

with

dream

-S

PORTRAITS

I

the
nimble
heat
had

long on a certain
taut precarious
holiday
frighteningly

performed
and
at tremont and bromfield i
paused a moment because

on the frying
curb the
quiet face
lay

which had been dorothy
and once
permitted
me for

twenty
iron
men
her common purple

soul
the absurd eyelids sulked
enormous
sobs puckered the foolish

breasts the
droll
mouth
wilted

and not old, harry, a
woman in the crowd
whinnied and a man squeezing her
waist said

the cop's rung for the
wagon but as i was

lifting the horror
of her toylike

head and vainly
tried to
catch one funny
hand opening the hard great

eyes to noone in particular she
gasped almost
loudly
i'm

so
drunG

k, dear

II

of evident invisibles
exquisite the hovering

at the dark portals

of hurt girl eyes

sincere with wonder

a poise a wounding
a beautiful suppression

the accurate boy mouth

now droops the faun head

now the intimate flower dreams

of parted lips
dim upon the syrinx

III

between nose-red gross
walls sprawling with tipsy
tables the abominable
floor belches smoky

laughter into the filigree
frame of a microscopic
stage whose jouncing curtain. , rises
upon one startling doll

undressed in unripe green with
nauseous spiderlegs
and excremental
hair and the eyes of the mother of

god who spits seeds of dead
song about home and love from her
transfigured face a queer
pulp of ecstasy

while in the battered
bodies the odd unlovely
souls struggle slowly and writhe
like caught.brave:flies;

IV

i walked the boulevard
i saw a dirty child
skating on noisy wheels of joy
pathetic dress fluttering

behind her a mothermonster
with red grumbling face
cluttered in pursuit
pleasantly elephantine

while nearby the father
a thick cheerful man
with majestic bulbous lips
and forlorn piggish hands

joked to a girlish whore
with busy rhythmic mouth
and silly purple eyelids
of how she was with child

V

the young
man sitting
in Dick Mid's Place
said to Death

teach me of her
Thy yonder servant who
in Thy very house silently
sits looking beyond the

kissing and the striving of
that old man who at her
redstone mouth renews his
childhood

and He
said
"willingly
for the tale is short

it was
i think yourself delivered into
both my hands herself to
always keep"

always?
 the young
 man sitting in Dick Mid's
 Place

asked
 "always"
 Death
 said

"then as i recollect her
 girlhood was by the kindly
 lips and body fatherly of a
 romantic tired business man

somewhat tweaked and dinted
 then
 did my servant
 become of the company of those

ladies with faces painteaten
 and bodies lightly
 desperate certainly wherefrom
 departed is youth's indispensable

illusion"

VI

but the other
day i was passing a certain
gate, rain
fell (as it will

in spring)
ropes
of silver gliding from sunny
thunder into freshness

as if god's flowers were
pulling upon bells of
gold i looked
up

and
thought to myself Death
and will You with
elaborate fingers possibly touch

the pink hollyhock existence whose
pansy eyes look from morning till
night into the street
unchangingly the always

old lady always sitting in her
gentle widow like
a reminiscence
partaken

softly at whose gate smile
always the chosen
flowers of reminding

VII

the rose
is dying the
lips of an old man murder

the petals
hush
mysteriously
invisible mourners move
with prose faces and sobbing, garments
The symbol of the rose

motionless
with grieving feet and
wings
mounts

against the margins of steep song
a stallion sweetness , the

lips of an old man murder

the petals.

VIII

Buffalo Bill 's
defunct

who used to

ride a watersmooth-silver

stallion

and break onetwothreefourfive pigeonsjustlikethat

Jesus

he was a handsome man

and what i want to know is

how do you like your blueeyed boy

Mister Death

IX

spring omnipotent goddess thou dost
inveigle into crossing sidewalks the
unwary june-bug and the frivolous angleworm
thou dost persuade to serenade his
lady the musical tom-cat, thou stuffest
the parks with overgrown pimply
cavaliers and gumchewing giggly
girls and not content
Spring, with this
thou hangest canary-birds in parlor windows

spring slattern of seasons you
have dirty legs and a muddy
petticoat, drowsy is your
mouth your eyes are sticky
with dreams and you have
a sloppy body
from being brought to bed of crocuses
When you sing in your whiskey-voice
the grass

rises on the head of the earth
and all the trees are put on edge

spring,
of the jostle of
thy breasts and the slobber

of your thighs
i am so very
glad that the soul inside me Hollers
for thou comest and your hands
are the snow
and thy fingers are the rain,
and i hear
the screech of dissonant
flowers, and most of all
i hear your stepping
freakish feet
feet incorrigible
ragging the world,

X

somebody knew Lincoln somebody Xerxes

this man: a narrow thudding timeshaped face
plus innocuous winking hands, carefully
inhabits number 1 on something street

Spring comes
the lean and definite houses

are troubled. A sharp blue day
fills with peacefully leaping air
the minute mind of the world.
The lean and

definite houses are
troubled. in the sunset their chimneys converse
angrily, their
roofs are nervous with the soft furious
light, and while fire-escapes and
roofs and chimneys and while roofs and fire-escapes and
chimneys and while chimneys and fire-escapes
and roofs are talking rapidly all together there happens
Something, and They

cease (and
one by one are turned suddenly and softly

into irresponsible toys.)

when this man with

the brittle legs winces
swiftly out of number 1 someThing
street and trickles carefully into the park
sits

Down. pigeons circle
around and around and around the

irresponsible toys
circle wildly in the slow-ly-in creasing fragility
—, Dogs
bark
children
play
-ing
Are

in the beautiful nonsense of twilight
and somebody Napoleon

POST IMPRESSIONS

I

beyond the brittle towns asleep
i look where stealing needles of foam
in the last light

thread the creeping shores

as out of dumb strong hands infinite

the erect deep upon me
in the last light
pours its eyeless miles

the chattering sunset ludicrously
dies, i hear only tidewings

in the last light
twitching at the world

II

the moon is hiding in
her hair.

The
lily
of heaven
full of all dreams,
draws down.

cover her briefness in singing
close her with intricate faint birds
by daisies and twilights
Deepen her,

Recite
upon her
flesh
the rain's

pearls singly-whispering

III

into the strenuous briefness
 Life:
 handorgans and April
 darkness, friends

i charge laughing.
 Into the hair-thin tints
 of yellow dawn,
 into the women-coloured twilight

i smilingly
 glide. I
 into the big vermillion departure
 swim, sayingly;

(Do you think?) the
 i do, world
 is probably made
 of roses & hello:

(of solongs and, ashes)

IV

i am going to utter a tree, Nobody
shall stop me

but first
earth , the reckless oral darkness
raging with thin impulse

i will have

a
 dream
 i
 think it shall be roses and
spring will bring her
worms rushing through loam.

(afterward i'll
climb
by tall careful muscles

into nervous and accurate silence But first
you)

press easily
at first, it will be leaves

and a little harder
for roses
only a little harder

last we
on the groaning flame of neat huge
trudging kiss moistly climbing hideously with
large
minute
hips, O

.press

worms rushing slowly through loam

V

any man is wonderful
and a formula
a bit of tobacco and gladness
plus little derricks of gesture

any skyscraper
bulges in the looseness of morning
but in twilight becomes
unutterably crisp

a thing,
which tightens
caught
in the hoisting light

any woman is smooth and ridiculous
a polite uproar of knuckling silent planes
a nudging bulb silkenly brutal
a devout flexion

VI

at the head of this street a gasping organ is waving moth-eaten tunes. a fatish hand turns the crank; the box spouts fairies, out of it sour gnomes tumble clumsily, the little box is spilling rancid elves upon neat sunlight into the flower-stricken air which is filthy with agile swarming sonal creatures

—Children, stand with circular frightened faces glaring at the shabby tiny smiling, man in whose hand the crank goes desperately, round and round pointing to the queer monkey

(if you toss him a coin he will pick it cleverly from, the air and stuff it seriously in, his minute pocket) Sometimes he does not catch a piece of money and then his master will yell at him over the music and jerk the little string and the monkey will sit, up, and look at, you with his solemn blinky eyes which never smile and after he has caught a, penny or three, pennies he will be thrown a peanut (which he will open skilfully with his, mouth carefully holding, it, in his little toylike hand) and then he will stiff-ly throw the shell away with a small bored gesture that makes the children laugh.

But i don't, the crank goes round desperate elves and hopeless gnomes and frantic fairies gush clumsily from the battered box fatish and mysterious the flowerstricken sun-

light is thickening dizzily is reeling gently the street and the children and the monkeyandtheorgan and the man are dancing slowly are tottering up and down in a trembly mist of atrocious melody . . . tiniest dead tunes crawl upon my face my hair is lousy with mutilated singing microscopic things in my ears scramble faintly tickling putrescent atomies,

and

i feel the jerk of the little string! the tiny smiling shabby man is yelling over the music i understand him i shove my round red hat back on my head i sit up and blink at you with my solemn eyeswhichneversmile

yes, By god.

for i am they are pointing at the queer monkey with a little oldish doll-like face and hairy arms like an ogre and rubbercoloured hands and feet filled with quick fingers and a remarkable tail which is allbyitself alive. (and he has a little red coat with i have a real pocket in it and the round funny hat with a big feather is tied under myhis chin.) that climbs and cries and runs and floats like a toy on the end of a string

Chimneys

SONNETS—REALITIES

I

the Cambridge ladies who live in furnished souls
are unbeautiful and have comfortable minds
(also, with the church's protestant blessings
daughters, unscented shapeless spirited)
they believe in Christ and Longfellow, both dead,
are invariably interested in so many things—
at the present writing one still finds
delighted fingers knitting for the is it Poles?
perhaps. While permanent faces coyly bandy
scandal of Mrs. N and Professor D
. . . . the Cambridge ladies do not care, above
Cambridge if sometimes in its box of
sky lavender and cornerless, the
moon rattles like a fragment of angry candy

II

goodby Betty, don't remember me
pencil your eyes dear and have a good time
with the tall tight boys at Tabari'
s, keep your teeth snowy, stick to beer and lime,
wear dark, and where your meeting breasts are round
have roses darling, it's all i ask of you—
but that when light fails and this sweet profound
Paris moves with lovers, two and two
bound for themselves, when passionately dusk
brings softly down the perfume of the world
(and just as smaller stars begin to husk
heaven) you, you exactly paled and curled

with mystic lips take twilight where i know:
proving to Death that Love is so and so.

III

ladies and gentlemen this little girl
with the good teeth and small important breasts
(is it the Frolic or the Century whirl?
one's memory indignantly protests)
this little dancer with the tightened eyes
crisp ogling shoulders and the ripe quite too
large lips always clenched faintly, wishes you
with all her fragile might to not surmise
she dreamed one afternoon

... or maybe read?

of a time when the beautiful most of her
(this here and This, do you get me?)
will maybe dance and maybe sing and be
abslatively posolutely dead,
like Coney Island in winter

IV

when you rang at Dick Mid's Place
the madam was a bulb stuck in the door.
a fang of wincing gas showed how
hair, in two fists of shrill colour,
clutched the dull volume of her tumbling face
scribbled with a big grin. her sow-
eyes clicking mischief from thick lids.
the chunklike nose on which always the four
tablets of perspiration erectly sitting.
—If they knew you at Dick Mid's
the three trickling chins began to traipse
into the cheeks "eet smeestaire steevensun
kum een, dare ease Bet, an Leelee, an dee beeg wun"
her handless wrists did gooey severe shapes.

V

"kitty". sixteen, 5' 1", white, prostitute.

ducking always the touch of must and shall,
whose slippery body is Death's littlest pal,

skilled in quick softness. Unspontaneous. cute.

the signal perfume of whose unrepente
focusses in the sweet slow animal
bottomless eyes importantly banal,

Kitty. a whore. Sixteen

you corking brute
amused from time to time by clever drolls
fearsomely who do keep their sunday flower.
The babybreasted broad "kitty" twice eight

—beer nothing, the lady'll have a whiskey-sour—

whose least amazing smile is the most great
common divisor of unequal souls.

VI

when thou hast taken thy last applause, and when
the final curtain strikes the world away,
leaving to shadowy silence and dismay
that stage which shall not know thy smile again,
lingering a little while i see thee then
ponder the tinsel part they let thee play;
i see the large lips livid, the face grey,
and silent smileless eyes of Magdalen.
The lights have laughed their last; without, the street
darkling awaiteth her whose feet have trod
the silly souls of men to golden dust:
she pauses on the lintel of defeat,
her heart breaks in a smile—and she is Lust

mine also, little painted poem of god

SONNETS—UNREALITIES

I

it may not always be so; and i say
that if your lips, which i have loved, should touch
another's, and your dear strong fingers clutch
his heart, as mine in time not far away;
if on another's face your sweet hair lay
in such a silence as i know, or such
great writhing words as, uttering overmuch,
stand helplessly before the spirit at bay;

if this should be, i say if this should be—
you of my heart, send me a little word;
that i may go unto him, and take his hands,
saying, Accept all happiness from me.
Then shall i turn my face, and hear one bird
sing terribly afar in the lost lands.

II

god gloats upon Her stunning flesh. Upon
the reachings of Her green body among
unseen things, things obscene (Whose fingers young

the caving ages curiously con)

—but the lunge of Her hunger softly flung
over the gasping shores

leaves his smile wan,
and his blood stopped hears in the frail anon

the shovings and the lovings of Her tongue.

god Is The Sea. All terrors of his being
quake before this its hideous Work most old
Whose battening gesture prophecies a freeing

of ghostly chaos

in this dangerous night
through moaned space god worships God—

(behold!
where chaste stars writhe captured in brightening fright)

III

it is at moments after i have dreamed
of the rare entertainment of your eyes,
when (being fool to fancy) i have deemed

with your peculiar mouth my heart made wise;
at moments when the glassy darkness holds

the genuine apparition of your smile
(it was through tears always) and silence moulds
such strangeness as was mine a little while;

moments when my once more illustrious arms
are filled with fascination, when my breast
wears the intolerant brightness of your charms:

one pierced moment whiter than the rest

—turning from the tremendous lie of sleep
i watch the roses of the day grow deep.

IV

when citted day with the sonorous homes
of light swiftly sink in the sorrowful hour,
thy counted petals O tremendous flower
on whose huge heart prospecting darkness roams

torture my spirit with the exquisite froms
and whithers of existence,

as by shores
soundless, the unspeaking watcher who adores

perceived sails whose mighty brightness dumbs

the utterance of his soul—so even i
wholly chained to a grave astonishment
feel in my being the delirious smart

of thrilled ecstasy, where sea and sky
marry—

to know the white ship of thy heart

on frailer ports of costlier commerce bent

V

a wind has blown the rain away and blown
the sky away and all the leaves away,
and the trees stand. I think i too have known
autumn too long

(and what have you to say,
wind wind wind—did you love somebody
and have you the petal of somewhere in your heart
pinched from dumb summer?

O crazy daddy
of death dance cruelly for us and start

the last leaf whirling in the final brain
of air!)Let us as we have seen see
doom's integration a wind has blown the rain

away and the leaves and the sky and the
trees stand:

the trees stand. The trees,
suddenly wait against the moon's face.

VI

a connotation of infinity
sharpens the temporal splendor of this night

when souls which have forgot frivolity
in lowliness, noting the fatal flight
of worlds whereto this earth 's a hurled dream

down eager avenues of lifelessness

consider for how much themselves shall gleam,
in the poised radiance of perpetualness.
When what 's in velvet beyond doomed thought

is like a woman amorous to be known;
and man, whose here is alway worse than naught,
feels the tremendous yonder for his own—

on such a night the sea through her blind miles
of crumbling silence seriously smiles

SONNETS—ACTUALITIES

I

a thing most new complete fragile intense,
which wholly trembling memory undertakes
—your kiss, the little pushings of flesh, makes
my body sorry when the minute moon
is a remarkable splinter in the quick
of twilight

 or if sunset utters one
unhurried muscled huge chromatic
fist skilfully modeling silence
—to feel how through the stopped entire day
horribly and seriously thrills
the moment of enthusiastic space
is a little wonderful, and say
Perhaps her body touched me; and to face

suddenly the lighted living hills

II

my love is building a building
around you, a frail slippery
house, a strong fragile house
(beginning at the singular beginning)

of your smile)a skilful uncouth
 prison, a precise clumsy
 prison(building thatandthis into 'Thus,
 Around the reckless magic of your mouth)

my love is building a magic, a discrete
tower of magic and (as i guess)

when Farmer Death (whom fairies hate) shall

crumble the mouth-flower fleet
He'll not my tower,
laborious, casual

where the surrounded smile hangs

breathless

III

yours is the music for no instrument
yours the preposterous colour unbeheld

—mine the unbought contemptuous intent
till this our flesh merely shall be excelled
by speaking flower

(if i have made songs

it does not greatly matter to the sun,
nor will rain care
cautiously who prolongs
unserious twilight) Shadows have begun

the hair's worm huge, ecstatic, rathe

yours are the poems i do not write.

In this at least we have got a bulge on death,
silence, and the keenly musical light

of sudden nothing la bocca mia "he
kissed wholly trembling"

or so thought the lady.

IV

by little accurate saints thickly which tread
the serene nervous light of paradise—
by angelfaces clustered like bright lice

about god's capable dull important head—
by on whom glories whisperingly impinge
(god's pretty mother) but may not confuse

the clever hair nor rout the young mouth whose
lips begin a smile exactly strange—
this painter should have loved my lady.
And by this throat a little suddenly lifted

in singing—hands fragile whom almost tire
the sleepshaped lilies—

should my lady's body
with these frail ladies dangerously respire:

impeccable girls in raiment laughter-gifted.

V

notice the convulsed orange inch of moon
perching on this silver minute of evening.

We'll choose the way to the forest—no offense
to you, white town whose spires softly dare.
Will take the houseless wisping rune
of road lazily carved on sharpening air.

Fields lying miraculous in violent silence

fill with microscopic withering
... (that's the Black People, cherie,
who live under stones.) Don't be afraid

and we will pass the simple ugliness
of exact tombs, where a large road crosses
and all the people are minutely dead.

Then you will slowly kiss me

Kenneth A. Lewis



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